

VHSO News Bites

Upcoming Events:

- ♦ Veterans Day, November 11th
- ♦ [America Recycles Day, November 15th](#)
- ♦ Thanksgiving, November 28th
- ♦ National Influenza Vaccination Week, December 1-7th

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Volume 5, Issue III

Fall 2013

Message from the Director

What a remarkable few months we have been having. Not only are we gearing up for the Golden Age Games at the end of July 2014, but we have also had a [visit from Secretary Eric K. Shinseki](#), won the [Arkansas Governor's Quality Award](#), named our [Federal Woman of the Year](#), and gone through a government shutdown.

I would like to say thank you to all of our employees for your dedication and commitment during the government shutdown, as it is our goal to provide seamless healthcare to our deserving Veterans. Several staff members worked hard to communicate any information that was passed along regarding the shutdown, and I appreciated your continued patience as we all continued to work during the shutdown. Luckily, things were resolved, but be aware that if a shutdown were to occur again, I will continue to strive to keep you updated and prepared for any impacts to our system and services.

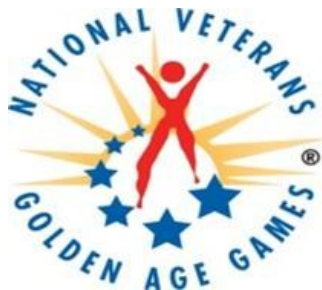


Please take a moment to stop by the Director's Office and view our beautiful Governor's Award. I am extremely proud of this award, because it is a reflection of you and how you have worked hard to create the best processes in the state. So congratulate yourselves for your job well done! Also, in the new clinical addition display case you can see the Skyline and National Service Award that the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce awarded VHSO for our clinical addition.

In the coming months you can expect continued work on the solar panels in the parking lot next to Building 4, also, we hope to have ground breaking soon for the new parking garage that is going to be built. You can also expect our Wi-Fi project, which will enable VHSO with Wi-Fi, to continue to move forward. VHSO is also continuing to work on building our Springfield, MO CBOC. We have a lot of projects coming up, and I appreciate your patience with any errors or delays this may cause, as we continue to expand and improve.

MARK A. ENDERLE, M.D.
Medical Center Director

Golden Age Games Update



The National Veterans Golden Age Games is the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. The National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world. The Games serve as a qualifying event for competition in the National Senior Games in a number of competitive events.

VHSO is just over 8 months away from kicking off the 2014 National Veteran Golden Age Games! We are very excited to announce that we are partnering with the University of Arkansas to host the best games yet. Our theme is Athletes in the Ozarks, and Veterans 55 and older will have the opportunity to compete in a variety of events such as nine ball, horseshoes, dominoes, checkers, shuffleboard, bowling, golf, and many others. Please let Carol Kick know if you are interested in volunteering to help make this games a resounding success!

Federal Woman of the Year



Winner Janet Oxford and Director Dr. Mark Enderle

The Federal Women's Program (FWP) has a primary responsibility to identify barriers to the hiring and advancement of women and to enhance employment opportunities for women in every area of federal service. Each year the FWP Committee seeks to recognize and celebrate outstanding individuals in our federal work community.

We seek to identify well-rounded federal employees who have:

- Contributed significantly to the mission and objectives of their agency

- Demonstrated exemplary interaction with fellow employees
- Demonstrated initiative in their development to become a better person/employee
- Been actively involved in community activities and/or humanitarian issues

Any employee can nominate another employee. This year an independent panel of 5 employees in various services chose the FWOTY.

For names and more information, check out the information in our blog, [VHSO Voice: FWOTY](#), and be sure to leave a comment letting them know how proud you are!



Supervisor/Manager Nominee



Scientific/Medical GS-10 and above Nominees



Clerical and Support Nominees



Pro/Admin/Tech GS-10 and Above Nominees



Scientific/Medical GS-10 and below

Privacy Corner

The Privacy/FOIA officer would like to take this time to thank each of you for the hard work and preparation that went into the Privacy Compliance Assessment in September. It was apparent during the walk thru by the inspectors that you are doing the right things to protect our Veterans privacy. I now challenge all of you to continue to improve our privacy posture as this is **our** program.

Privacy Rights Afforded to Veterans under Statute and Regulations:

- Right to Notice of Privacy Practices,
- Right to Request Amendment,
- Right to Access Record, Right to Request Restriction,
- Right to Confidential Right to Opt-out of Facility Directory,
- Right to an Accounting of Disclosures,
- Right to file a Privacy Complaint

For questions concerning any privacy related issue, please contact David Smith @ 6-4038.



David Smith

Secretary Eric K. Shinseki Visits VHSO

On August 6, 2013 VHSO was proud to host Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. Secretary Shinseki had a very busy schedule while in Northwest Arkansas. He started his morning by meeting with VHSO leadership, various program coordinator and experts at VHSO, community leaders from the University of Arkansas and Veteran Treatment Court representatives. He took a short tour around our newest addition, Building 21, where he got to see our Dental Clinic, Tele-health Program, OEF/OIF/OND Program, and Women's Clinic. During the tour Secretary Shinseki was joined by congressional representatives from several offices and Senator Mark Pryor as well. Secretary Shinseki had the chance to stop and speak to several of our Veterans during the tour. That afternoon as he visited the Wal mart home offices and in the evening he spoke at the National Military Order of the Purple Heart Convention in Rogers.

Secretary Shinseki was not able to visit many areas in our facility, due to his short trip. Nonetheless, he did express how impressed he was with our work and our employees. He commented to media later in the day that he had the privilege to visit one of the best VA facilities in the country, and acknowledged our strong leadership in serving Veterans.



Spotlight On: GEMS and the Recycling Committee



What is GEMS?

GEMS stands for Green Environmental Management System.

Why do we have GEMS?

In 2007, President Bush signed an executive order titled, "Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management." This order instructed federal agencies to conduct their environmental, transportation, and energy-related activities in an environmentally, economically and fiscally sound, efficient, and sustainable manner. Some of the goals this order sets include areas such as: energy efficiency, acquisition, renewable energy, toxic chemical reduction, recycling, sustainable buildings, electronics stewardship, fleets, and water conservation.

What does GEMS do?

Our GEMS program coordinates environmental programs into an integrated framework to promote efficiency and effectiveness in these two aspects:

1. ensure compliance with all regulations and directives relating to protecting the environment
2. Pursue the "greening" of VHA with deliberative and cost-effective selection of products, use of recovery/recycling, and development of work practices toward a higher standard of excellence?

Cool! But what does that mean for VHSO?

Every VA hospital in the nation has and uses GEMS. Therefore, GEMS is our facility's tool to become a "green" health care system. This includes strides in our efforts towards making recycling, energy management, solid waste disposal, and hazardous waste disposal as green as we can.

Isn't there a committee for GEMS?

Yes there is! The GEMS committee helps our GEMS Coordinator, Tod Johnson, pick yearly goals for the GEMS program based on our facility needs. Make sense right, who better to work on making our facility green than those who know what the needs are.

What has the GEMS Committee done for me lately?

Are you ready to recycle your white paper? Well, that is something the GEMS committee and GEMS coordinator have been working on extensively over the last year. Our facility uses a lot of white paper, and currently we don't recycle any of it. The committee brought this to light, and now our GEMS coordinator has been working on finding a company that will shred and recycling our paper for us. This will be one of the 2014 goals set by the GEMS committee: to start recycling white paper in 2014. What a great way for us to be more green!

Is there also a Recycling Committee?

Yes, the Recycling Committee, which reports to the GEMS Committee, is up and running with Paula Ellington as the chair. What is the Recycling Committee up to now? Currently, the Recycling Committee is working on locating needs for recycling bins in break rooms and other areas for staff and throughout the facility for patients. Recently, the Recycling Committee purchased bins to be placed on several location outside of our buildings, so you should start to see those around the facility, if you haven't already. Also, on November 15, 2013 there will be an event, America Recycles Day, hosted by the committee.

Tell me more about this America Recycles Day event?

The event will be November 15, 2013 from 11:00am-1:00pm in the auditorium. There will be small snacks provided, games, a display of the new recycling bins, and lots of educational information for you to take back to your services. The event celebrates America Recycles Day, which is a nationally recognized day dedicated to promoting and celebrating recycling in the United States.



Patient Comments and Letters

Veteran's family's letter to the local newspaper:

"I wish to thank **all the staff at the Fayetteville Veterans Affairs hospital** for the wonderful care they took of our father recently... The support services for patients and their families was above and beyond wonderful"

Letter received in May:

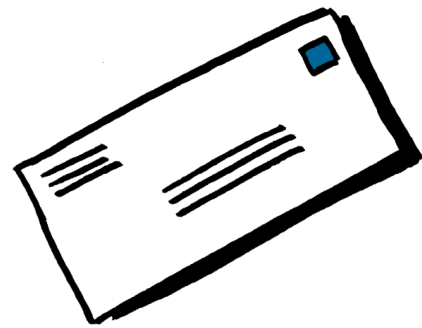
"My opinion of the **Bran-son VA clinic** is that they are excellent, interested in the patients welfare, and go out of their way to treat what symptoms they are trained to treat."

Another Facebook recommendation:

"...**the employees and volunteers** I have met are very friendly and polite. ... No place or person is perfect but this is the best I have found so far."

Letter from the local VA Hill Neighborhood Association:

"On behalf of all your neighbors, please accept our THANKS for honoring the pledge to create a green screen along Woolsey St. as previously discussed. It looks terrific already and is much appreciated!"



Recent Facebook recommendation:

"Thank you **Kasey (HR)** for your time and efforts today. I sincerely appreciate the time you spent trying to assist me today. You made the extra effort, and not many do! You ROCK!"

Affordable Care Act and You

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 (Public Law 111-148) was created to expand access to affordable health care coverage for all Americans, lower costs and improve quality and care coordination. Beginning January 1, 2014, the ACA's individual shared responsibility provision requires each individual to: maintain minimum essential coverage (MEC), qualify for an exemption, or make a payment when filing Federal income tax return.

The Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program plans meet the ACA MEC requirement for 2014.

When the provision takes effect in 2014, there will be

a new way to buy health insurance for those employees who are not eligible for FEHB or have cost issues or concerns with FEHB: the Health Insurance Marketplace. The Marketplace is designed to help individuals find health insurance that meets individual needs and budget and can be accessed at www.healthcare.gov. Marketplace plans and premium information will be available beginning October 1, 2013.

Here are some FAQs from OPM:

Q. How will the Health Insurance Marketplaces affect the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program?

A. The Health Insurance Marketplace will not impact the FEHB Program. Federal employees who are eligible for FEHB will still be able to participate in the Program the same as before.

Q. I am a new employee and I am eligible for coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. Do I need to enroll, or am I automatically enrolled in a health plan? If the latter, which health plan am I enrolled in? Can I change my enrollment if I do not want that health plan?

A. If you are a new employee and are eligible for FEHB coverage, you must select a health plan yourself. You

will not be automatically enrolled in any health plan. The FEHB Program offers a wide selection of health plans that are available wherever you live.

Q. Does the coverage of all the plans in the FEHB Program qualify as minimum essential coverage as required by the Affordable Care Act's individual shared responsibility requirement?

A. Yes, the coverage of all the FEHB plans qualifies as minimum essential coverage and satisfies the Affordable Care Act's individual shared responsibility requirement.

Employee Awards

Congratulations to the following VHSO staff members on their length of service awards:

JUNE:

10 Years Of Service:

Chris Allbritton
Julie Evans
Tiffany Goodwin
Heather Hanes
Elizabeth Lawson
Michelle Prime
Anthony Howard Ross
Deborah Stringer
Linda Thornbrugh

15 Years Of Service:

Allen Binder
Stacy Perry
Ruben Sanchez
Ricky Wilson

20 Years Of Service:

Laverne Blackwell
Patrick Guthrie

JULY:

10 Years Of Service:

Mary Borkowski
Jessie Cargill
Candace Katz
Glenda Myers
Ann Polasek

15 Years Of Service:

Alan Baker
Kimberly Divis
Rolando Dy
Sharon Holder
Michael McCloud
Amy Shields
Ronald Skaggs

20 Years Of Service:

Raymond Jones

25 Years Of Service:

Michael Moravits

AUGUST:

10 Years Of Service:

Elizabeth Mick
Perry Payne
Jeremy Plante
Jeneen Reed

15 Years Of Service:

Shelly Bassham
Linda Odell

20 Years Of Service:

Mitchell Goodwin
Thomas Simmons

25 Years Of Service:

Judith Hemphill
Emily Wemyss

30 Years Of Service:

Anita Barber
George Saylor

35 Years Of Service:

Conny Wood



VHSO wins Best in the State

That's right! September 16, 2013 Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks was presented with the Arkansas Governor's Quality Award. A total of 16 organizations were presented honors, and over 300 business and civic leaders attended the ceremony.



The Governor's Quality Award recognizes organizations throughout the state for their performance excellence and best-in-class processes. The team that reviewed our site was trained in the Baldrige Criteria, which is the nation's only Presidential award for performance excellence.

The application process for the Governor's Award is a task VHSO took very seriously. The application asked us to include a self-assessment of how our organization applies the seven categories and 18 items of the award criteria throughout our health care system. Some of the categories included leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, and results.

Our writing committee worked diligently to make sure that your hard work was highlighted for the reviewers to see.

A special thanks goes to those members on VHSO's writing committee, who worked to submit the application.

Writing Committee Members:

- Pam Austin
- Kim Adkins
- Anne Burnett
- Brian Moore
- Linda Thornbrugh
- Jacque Long



VHSO Employee of the Month

June: Wayne Wagon,
Nutrition and Food Ser-
vices



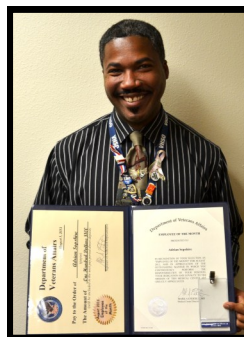
What others say about Wayne: "Wayne is the first one we turn to supporting high level meal preparations for Medical Center Directors, area auxiliary commanders including VFW, American Legion and Order of the Purple Heart."

July: Mary Grace Millwee,
Pharmacy



What others say about Mary: "Keen ability to think outside the box and troubleshoot issues as the arise is one of the main reasons she was selected to be on the Emergency Responder Team."

August: Adrian Sopshire,
Director's Office



What others say about Adrian: "Adrian superbly managed 13 staff members while assuming various additional duties to compensate for personnel shortages."

If you know someone you think deserves to be Employee of the Month, be sure to nominate them! The form can be found on our Intranet site, under [Employee Awards](#).



VHSO is on Facebook!

Receive important highlights and updates about happenings
at the VA and VHSO

Find us at: www.facebook.com/VAFayettevilleAR

Military Order of the Purple Heart Ceremony

On August 1, 2013 VHSO hosted our annual Military Order of the Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony. VHSO was excited to have Retired Brigadier General Gary Profit, Senior Director, Walmart Military Programs, as our keynote speaker. At Walmart he is leading the efforts to help hire 100,000 Veterans over the next five years. BG(R) Profit addressed the audience of dignitaries including representatives for Senator John Boozeman and Representative Steve Womack and City of Fayetteville Mayor Lionel Jordan, Military Order of the Purple Heart Recipients from various conflicts going back to World War II, their friends and families, and VA medical center staff. BG(R) Profit spoke of the great sacrifice our Veterans who have received the Purple Heart have had to pay and he saluted them for it.



The Purple Heart is an American decoration and the oldest military decoration in the world in present use. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the armed forces of the U.S. who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy and it is specifically a combat decoration. At the ceremony we did not present any new Purple Heart decorations, however previous recipients were recognized and honored.



Thank you to the MOPH Committee, who worked alongside Veteran volunteers, to make this



event happen. Your hard work is appreciated!

All Employee Survey

Thank you to everyone who took the All Employee Survey in the month of September. The deadline has passed, and we appreciate all of you who made sure that your voice will be heard.

The survey kicked off with a street fair lunch, which had donated food and drinks from employees. We had a great

turnout and thank you everyone for your support for this event.

A special thanks goes to Janet Oxford who is this year's All Employee Survey facility site coordinator. She worked diligently throughout the month to remind us that there was still time and answer any questions.

would love for it to be 100%! That response rate put us in 6th place in our VISN.

We had several services or subsets to services reach 100% completion, and would like to say thank you for your responses. Thank you to:

- Associate Director's Office
- Chief of Staff's Office
- Fiscal
- Human Resources
- Inventory
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Police
- Primary Care Administrators
- Supervisory MAS
- Quality Improvement and Performance
- Safety

- SEOM
- Ultrasound
- Voluntary

So what's next? Well, Janet Oxford will be announcing the winners of our prizes, which included leadership spending half a day in your service. So be on the lookout for that! To see more photos from the event, check out the story in our blog, [VHSO Voice: All Employee Survey](#).



VHSO had a response rate of 58.1% out of all our employees. That is certainly something to be proud of, and next year we



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Mental Health Summit

The Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks Mental Health Summit was held on September 4, 2013 in order to facilitate the community and the VA coming together to collaborate on services for Veterans. Every VA Hospital hosted a similar Summit, and VHSO hopes it will become an annual event. The goal was to network with the community, brainstorm challenges and solutions regarding Veterans needs and services, and create an action plan. Charlie Plummer, Social Worker at VHSO, discussed the purpose of the Summit and how many Veterans would benefit from services, but are not utilizing them. There were four breakout sessions held to discuss: Benefits & Eligibility, Education & Outreach, Homelessness & Legal Challenges, and Veterans Access to Services. Since completion of the summit, a mail group has been developed to increase communication between community agencies and the VA. There are also plans to update the VHSO Mental Health webpage and promote the site to encourage community agencies to provide information to Veterans about how to access mental health services and other needs.

